

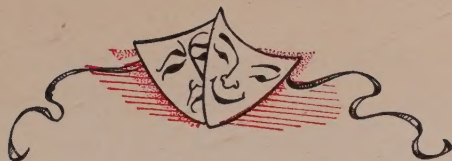


LET'S ACT

BOOK TWO

K. Nuttall

LONGMANS



LET'S ACT

BY

KENNETH NUTTALL

BOOK TWO

LONGMANS



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TO THE TEACHER

This series of books is intended to assist, guide and encourage primary school teachers and children in their work in movement, speech and dramatic activity. Although the books are numbered consecutively from I to IV, it must be emphasised that they do not constitute a four-book, four-year course covering the complete junior school span. They are planned as a two-year course for the third- and fourth-year children only, although it is felt that Books I and II might profitably be used with the brighter children of the second year. The theory and principles underlying the work are more fully stated in the *Teacher's Book* and all who wish seriously to attempt this work are advised to study it before starting on the practical lessons with the children. This applies particularly, of course, to those who are attempting this work for the first time.

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

William Shakespeare, who was, as you probably know, the greatest of English playwrights, once wrote :

“All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players ;
They have their exits and their entrances ;
And one man in his time plays many parts.”

Boys and girls too may play many parts and thoroughly enjoy doing it. Not only does the playing of parts give us enjoyment—it also helps us to learn. And what a delightful way of learning literature it is, to act the stories we study and thus make them real and alive! So, too, can we make our history lessons real, by acting the great events we read about; and by making and performing plays about people in other lands, we discover how they live and so, perhaps without realising it, we are learning geography.

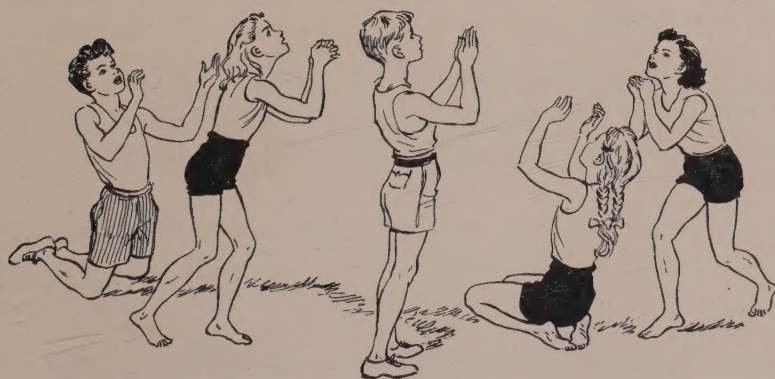
But, you may say, this is nothing new to us. We have always acted stories—at home, in the school playground, in the streets or in the fields! And so you have! You are all actors. You act when you are “being” somebody else, and I am sure that at some time or other you have all played at being pirates or Red Indians or gangsters or some people other than yourselves.

Well, this book contains many games and exercises of that kind. And just as you enjoy the vigour and movement of your own games of imagination, so, I hope, you will enjoy working through this book with your teacher.

The first thing we must learn is to enjoy and use the space around us. We therefore should take off our outer clothing (and our shoes and socks too, if our Hall has a good, smooth floor) so that we can move, leap, skip, jump and dance with complete freedom.

The second thing we must learn is to *feel* the part we are playing. If we are being a lion we must really feel ferocious and savage; if we are playing the part of a starving, ill-treated slave, we must really feel hungry and desperate!

You cannot pour milk out of a jug unless you have first put some in! Similarly, the more you put into these games and exercises, the more you will enjoy them. So let us turn over the page and make a start!



1. SOME MOVEMENT GAMES

Your teacher will take these Movement Games with you.

Find a space.

Move round the hall fairly quickly. Feel the air on your legs, your arms, your face.

Move round the hall and keep reaching up to the sky. Try to fly along without touching the floor.

Sit cross-legged. Let us use our arms and hands to make *gliding* movements. Let them move in any direction—slow, smooth movements.

We are escaping from a cave. The entrance is very low—only about ten inches from the ground—and we have to wriggle along on our tummies and take care not to bump our heads!





Now let us sit cross-legged on the floor. We are tailors sewing a fine coat. (Don't forget to thread your needle before you sew!) Can you feel the needle between your fingers? Can you feel the weight and texture of the material?

Each one of us is inside a big paper bag. We can just touch the top of the bag with our finger-tips if we stretch up high. We can just touch the sides of the bag if we stretch out as far as we can to the left and the right (bend one knee), or if we stretch out in front or behind. Feet apart! Now let us touch *all over* the inside of the bag with our finger-tips—high, low, sideways, all directions.

Now, still inside the paper bag, let us move round the room, taking the bag with us. As we move, let us again touch the inside all over—high, low, in all directions.

Now let us be very old men and very old ladies. We are bent and feeble and we pretend we have a stick to help us to walk.

2. A STORY TO ACT

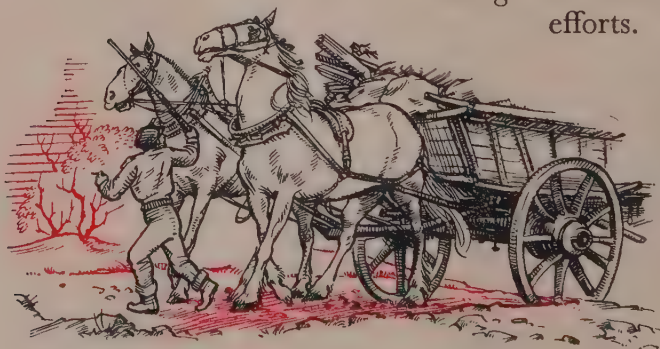
Here is a story. Perhaps Teacher will read it to us while we follow in our own books. We must listen with great care because afterwards we are going to act it.

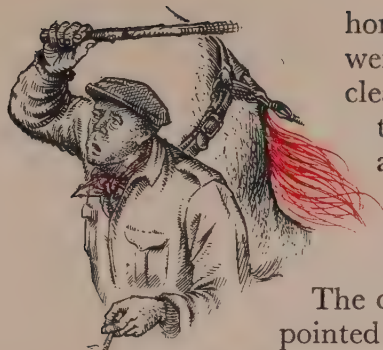
WHY THE CHILDREN WERE LATE

The Headmistress of the small country school was worried. It was almost twenty minutes past nine and most of the children had not yet arrived at school. What could have happened to them? At last, at nine twenty-five, they appeared, and what a tale they had to tell!

It appeared that they had all been walking along the country road on their way to school, chatting of this and that, when round a bend before them came a wagon, drawn by two large cart-horses. On the wagon was a very heavy load and it was hard work for the horses to pull it up the slight hill. They worked and strained, their strong muscles rippling in the sunshine and their great heads nodding with their efforts. Their driver, who

walked by their side, was a big, brutish man with a scowling red face. He carried a thick stick which he used to beat the poor





horses because, he considered, they were not going fast enough. It was clear that the horses were putting the utmost effort into their work and could not possibly move any faster, but the cruel man, losing his temper, began to beat the poor creatures unmercifully!

The children saw this ugly sight. One pointed to the wagon and horses and drew the attention of the others to what was going on. They were shocked by the sight, and stood for a moment, wondering what they could do. Then, the child who had first seen the cart seemed to say, "Come on! Let's go and stop him!"

At once the children ran down the hill to the cart and horses and stood in a group round the man telling him to stop. Some of the children were very angry and shook their fists at the cruel man. Others seemed to be pleading with him to stop beating the poor animals. One boy seized his arm to prevent him from striking again.

When the man heard the shouting children gathered round him and felt the hand on his arm, he stopped the horses and lowered his stick. He looked round at the children with a fierce expression on his face. As he heard what they were saying, he became extremely angry. He raised his stick again and was just going to lay it about the children's backs when, round the bend, came a policeman. He quickly realised what was happening and strode



up to the group. "What's going on here?" he seemed to say. The children at once told him all about it, pointing to the cruel man and the horses.

Then the policeman seemed to say to them, "You children run along to school and leave this to me!" The children, glad that the policeman had appeared at the right moment, ran off down the lane and along to school, where they were praised by the Headmistress for having done what they could to stop a very cruel act.



Now we are going to act the story.

First we must decide who is going to play:

The headmistress

The cruel man

The policeman

The child who first sees the cart

The two horses

The rest can be the other children.

Next we must decide where in our acting-space we should have the school and where the road runs. We must not forget to have a bend in the road because that is important to the story.

Now let us act the story in movement only. We must not speak or make any sound at all. We must tell the story and make everything clear by the way we *feel*, the way we *move* and by the expressions on our faces. This is called MIMING.

It would be very helpful if Teacher would give us a “running commentary”—that means tell the story again as we act it. This would help us to feel we really are the people or animals we are pretending to be, and prevent us from going too quickly or too slowly.

* * * * *

Now let us act the story again, but this time we may speak, making up the words as we go along. We may do the same actions and movements as before, but this time we “speak our lines”.

Perhaps you would now like to choose different people to play the various parts.

What would the Headmistress say as she anxiously paces up and down the schoolroom waiting for her late scholars?

“Dear me! Dear me! Where can those children be? It’s twenty past nine and not a sign of them. I hope nothing dreadful has happened to them . . .”

Do you think she might say that? Or perhaps you have better ideas! If you really *feel* anxious or *feel* angry or *feel* frightened, the words will come readily enough!

4. MAKING OUR OWN PLAY

—FROM AN OBJECT

Now let us divide into four groups. If you are already in four teams, they will do very nicely.

Each group will be given the name of an object. Suppose, for instance, that the object given is:

“A WHISTLE”

The group would then go to a corner of the Hall and think about it, making up a story about the object which, afterwards, they would act . . .

A whistle . . . what kind of a whistle? Perhaps a policeman's whistle. Three boys, coming home from a scout meeting one night, hear sounds of a scuffle. On rounding a corner they see a policeman struggling with two men. The men are thieves. They have been caught in the act of trying to snatch a hand-bag from an old lady who stands by, helpless and frightened. The policeman is trying to arrest them, but the thieves are getting the better of him. The three boys run up to the struggling men and wonder what they can do to help. They must do something, for they are scouts and therefore good citizens. The oldest boy acts as leader. He tells the other two to attack the thieves, taking one each, and to cling on for all they are worth, so hampering their movements. He pushes his way into the centre of the group, takes the policeman's whistle from his pocket and blows several shrill blasts upon it. Another policeman, hearing

the sound, comes running up to help, and soon the two thieves are over-powered and handcuffs are snapped on to their wrists. One of the scouts hands the bag, which had been lying in the gutter, back to the old lady. The police are very grateful to the boys, who finish off their good deed by assisting the old lady to her home.

After making up the story, the group will decide who are to play the various parts. Then they will act the story, making up the words as they go along. The rest will watch the performance and, afterwards, say how they think the story or the acting could have been improved.

Here are the objects:

- Group 1. A RING
- Group 2. A BABY'S PRAM
- Group 3. A SHILLING
- Group 4. A WATCH

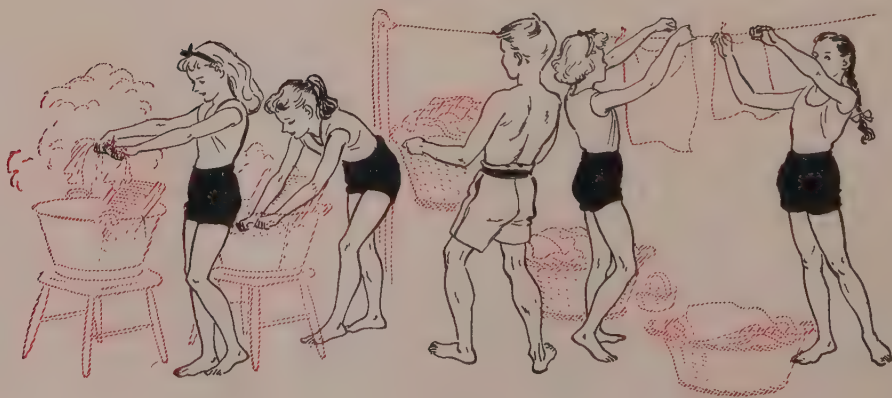
Now go to your corners, think about the object, make up a story about it and act it.

4. MORE MOVEMENT GAMES

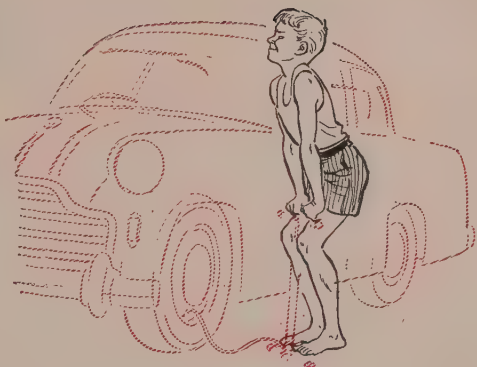
We have just filled the bath. We dip our hands in the water to test it. Oh! It is much too hot! We dance around, shaking our stinging fingers.

We are washer-women. Before us are tubs containing hot, soapy water and the clothes to be washed. We dab the clothes about, then lift them out one at a time. We wring each garment thoroughly until it is as dry as we can make it, then place it in a clothes-basket. ✓

Now we put the clothes out to dry. We carry the heavy clothes-basket outside and place it on the ground. Then we take out the garments, one at a time, shake them out and hang them on the line, fastening them with pegs.



We are motorists and one of the tyres on our car has gone down. We take the hand-pump, attach the nozzle to the tyre, hold the base of the pump firmly between our feet, and pump up and down vigorously until the tyre is hard again. (Feel the pressure on the downward stroke.)



We are travellers walking through the jungle. Suddenly, immediately before us, we see a deadly snake, poised and ready to strike! We stop. We stare with fascination and horror at the snake. Then, slowly, still keeping our eyes on the creature, we back away until we are safe behind a clump of bushes.



We are a tribe of people wandering in the wilderness. We are resting when a great, black, threatening cloud covers the sky. We watch it with fear. Then, suddenly, the cloud breaks and the sun comes pouring through. We lift our hands and faces to the warm, welcome sunshine.

We are stranded in the desert. One of our members has gone to fetch help. He has been gone a long time. We search the horizon with our eyes, looking for the cloud of dust which will tell us of the approach of our rescuers. We shade our eyes from the hot sun. We screw up our eyes in order to cut out some of the blinding glare. We are anxious! At last we see the welcome cloud of dust. We are saved! We wave and cheer.

Form groups of five or six children. The tallest of the group stands in the centre; the rest kneel or lie around in a rough circle. The one in the centre has a basket of loaves. The rest are hungry and starving. You plead with him to give you food. He refuses. You plead again. Again he refuses.



Now, still in the same groups, your mood changes. You feel very angry. You show your anger—you threaten the greedy one who refuses to share his loaves with you!

5. A STORY TO MIME

Here is another story for you to mime :

THE TYRANT

Once upon a time, many years ago, the people of a far city were very unhappy. They were ruled by a cruel, tyrant King. The harvest had been poor and the people were starving. There was only a little food in the city and that was in the cruel King's granaries. There it lay, strongly guarded, and the King was too greedy to give even the smallest portion of it to anyone else.

One day the townsfolk gathered together and decided to go to the Palace to ask the King for food. So, out they came from the town, weak with hunger, helping each other along the road to the steps which led up to the great door of the Palace. When the King's guards saw the people approaching, they came out and stood in a line on the steps, holding their spears and ready to press back anyone who should

be too bold. The people halted at the foot of the steps and called for the King. The King, hearing their cries, came out through the great door and stood, arrogantly, at the top of the steps behind his guards.

The people pleaded with him to give them food. With a haughty gesture, he rejected their pleas.





Again the people begged for food and again they were refused. Then the people began to be angry.

They shook their fists and threatened the King.

The guards tightened their grip on their spears.

The situation began to look ugly.

Just then, one of the crowd noticed a stranger approaching. There was something unusual about this person—some strange

power. All the people stopped threatening the King and turned to watch the newcomer. He slowly approached and seemed to say to the people, "Do not worry! All will be well!" The crowd slowly fell back, leaving a path to the bottom of the steps. The stranger walked slowly down the path between the people, until he was within a few yards of the guards. Suddenly, he made a gesture and the guards dropped their spears and fell senseless on the steps. The people watched open-mouthed and the King began to look very afraid!



Slowly the stranger advanced to the steps of the Palace. Again he made the gesture and the cruel King, clutching his heart, crumpled and fell! The stranger turned to face the people and seemed to say, "Rejoice! Your troubles are over!" And the people *did* rejoice! They jumped, clapped their hands and skipped for joy! Soon they would be hungry no more!



First we must choose the actors who are to play:

The tyrant King
Six guards
The stranger

The rest can play the townsfolk.

Next we must decide where the Palace is to be. It would be helpful if we could use a stage or platform and arrange some kind of steps leading up to it to represent the front of the Palace. If no real steps are available, boxes could be used.

The opposite end of the hall might be the town where the citizens meet and decide to go to the Palace to plead with the King.

We must also decide where the stranger is to make his entrance and the best place for the King and the guards to stand whilst awaiting *their* entrances.

Perhaps Teacher will again give us a running-commentary to help us along.

6. SPEAKING

Just as we have to move our bodies in various ways when we are miming to make us *look* like the characters we are acting, so we have to use our voices in different ways when we are reading or acting a play, to make us *sound* like the character we are pretending to be. If we are playing the part of an old witch, we have to make our voices old and cracked like an old woman's voice; if we are playing a bold, adventurous hero, we have to make our voices bold and ringing, and so on.

Sometimes we have to speak loudly, sometimes softly, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, sometimes gaily, sometimes sadly, sometimes angrily, sometimes fearfully, according to the kind of person we are acting and the mood and meaning of what we are saying.

It is late and Tom has not yet arrived home from school. His mother is worried.

She says: "Seven o'clock! Wherever can that boy have got to? I do hope he hasn't met with an accident!"

How would she say it?

The shop-man is doing his very best to sell Mrs. Jones a new pail.

He says: "That's a real bargain, that is, madam. It'll last you for years and years and still be as good as new."

How would he say it?

Here are some more exercises for you to practise:

Mother is losing patience with Derek because he is so slow.

She cries: "Oh, do get a move on, Derek! Do you expect me to wait here all day whilst you just dawdle about?"

Jane was a conceited girl.

She boasted: "I don't want to boast, you know, but my painting is pretty good—I think it's about the best in the class."

Bill has quarrelled with his friend. He is very angry.

He shouts: "If you think you can come in here and throw your weight about with me, you're jolly well mistaken. Get out before I lose my temper and break your silly neck!"

Mr. Fuzzbuzz loves his own importance. Even when he is chatting to his friends he sounds as though he were making a public speech.

He says: "My dear friend, I hasten to assure you that your proposed course of action has, as it were, my unqualified approval."

The Preacher is just reaching the climax of his sermon. To his spellbound congregation he says,

"Be not afraid, my friends! With faith, with hope and with courage, let us surge forward to a better life!"

Fred has just shown Joan a dead rat. She is afraid.

She cries: "Ugh! Take it away! Take it away! I hate it! Horrid, nasty thing—take it away!"

Mrs. Judd, who has been unjustly accused of gossiping, is very indignant.

She says: "Well, really! I never said any such thing! You can ask anybody! You know I wouldn't say a thing like that!"

Carl is a bully and has just been shown up. He is really a coward! One of the boys in his class taunts him.

He says: "Oh! Look who's afraid now! If you're so brave why don't you fight him?"

Mr. Jolly is telling his family about a very funny experience he has just had.

He splutters: "Laugh? You never saw anything so comical in your life! I thought I should 'a' died! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!"

Mary has just heard a piece of nasty malicious gossip about Joan, her best friend. She is very indignant.

She says: "I don't believe a word of it! Joan would never do a thing like that—I'm quite sure she wouldn't!"

At the Christmas family party, Uncle Fred is telling how he spent the night in a haunted room. His listeners sit spellbound as he says:

"I awoke with a start and sat up in bed. I felt that there was a—a thing in the room . . . moving softly . . . I could feel my heart thumping like a drum! With trembling fingers, I switched on the light."

Carol is alarmed because her friend, Linda, wants to take some money that doesn't belong to her.

She pleads: "Don't do it, Linda! *Please* don't do it! You'll only get yourself into trouble. It's wrong, and you *know* it's wrong."

7. THREE "SNIPPETS"

On the next five pages are three "snippets", or extracts from plays, for you to practise.

Let us divide into three groups, and each group will take an extract and prepare it.

First we may like to appoint a Producer who will take complete charge of the production.

Then we should choose the players and they should learn their lines.

When ready, each group will perform the extract before the rest of the class who will be asked to say what they think is good and how the acting or production could be improved. This is called "criticising".

When criticising, we might ask ourselves :

1. Could we follow the story clearly?
2. Could we hear the players clearly?
3. Did the players make us believe in them? If not, why not?
4. Was the extract taken too quickly or too slowly?
5. Did the Producer arrange his players in interesting groups?
6. If we had been producing, what should we have done differently, and why?

THE FIRST SNIPPET

Characters:

Mrs. Higgins (whose great-great-grandmother probably lived in a shoe!)

Beryl Higgins, her eldest

John Higgins } twins
Ethel Higgins }

Pearl Higgins

Willie Higgins, her youngest

A Bus Conductor

Scene: Inside a bus

(The conductor is standing on the platform at the rear of the bus)

Beryl *(off-stage, excitedly)* Come on, Mum! This is the right bus.

Conductor *(with his hand on the bell)* Hurry along, please!

(Enter Beryl, holding Willie's hand, and followed by Pearl, Ethel and Mrs. Higgins who is carrying a large basket)

Beryl Let's sit at the front.

John *(on the conductor's platform)* I want to go on top!

Mrs. Higgins Oh, come on, John—we can't all climb up those stairs!

John Oh, Mum, let's go on top!

Mrs. Higgins Oh, do be quiet and come inside! You'll fall off the bus!

(John comes in reluctantly)

Mrs. Higgins Now sit down, all of you!

(They find seats. The conductor rings the bell. We hear the sound of the bus starting)

Ethel I want to sit next to Beryl.

Willie No, I'm sitting next to Beryl!

Mrs. Higgins Move up, Beryl—there's room for three of you.

(Ethel moves over on to Beryl's seat)

Willie Are we nearly at the picnic now, Mum?

Pearl Don't be silly, Willie, we've only just started!

Conductor Fares, please!

Mrs. Higgins One and five halves to Brockley Woods.

Conductor Two and four, please.

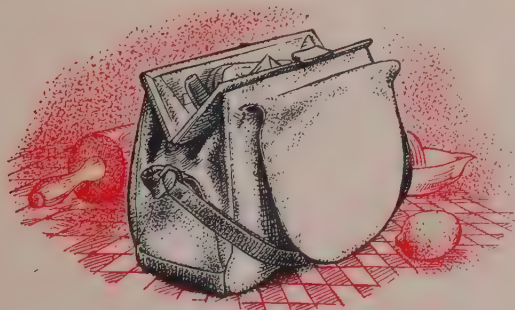
Mrs. Higgins Where's my bag? Beryl, have you got my bag?

Beryl No, Mum.

Mrs. Higgins Have any of you got my bag?

The others *(together)* No, Mum!

Mrs. Higgins What a nuisance! I left it on the kitchen table!



THE SECOND SNIPPET

Characters:

Molly }
Sally } two little sisters
Mother
Father

Scene: A bedroom

(It is Christmas morning. Molly and Sally are fast asleep in bed. Christmas bells can be heard ringing outside. Molly wakes. She sits up, yawns and stretches. She hears the bells)

Molly Wake up, Sally! Wake up! It's Christmas morning!

Sally (*yawning*) What d'you say?

Molly It's Christmas morning! Wake up!

Sally Christmas morning?

Molly Yes! Come on, sleepy-head!

(She shakes her gently)

Sally Listen, Molly! The bells!

Molly Never mind the bells! Let's look in our stockings.

Sally Ooh, yes! Let's look in our st . . . Molly! Our stockings have gone!

Molly No! Oh, no!

Sally (*beginning to cry*) Yes they have! Father Christmas has forgotten us!

Molly (*crying*) Oh-h-h-h-h-h-h!!!

(*Enter Mother and Father*)

Father Now! Now! Now! What's all this noise? This is a fine way to greet Christmas morning!

Mother Whatever's the matter, dears?

Sally F-Father C-Christmas has forgotten us!

Molly Our stockings have gone!

Mother Gone?

Molly } (*together*) Oh-h-h-h-h-h-h-h!!!
Sally }

Father Wait a minute, my dears! What are these, here, on the floor?

Molly } (*together*) What, Daddy?
Sally }

Mother Come and see.

(*Sally and Molly jump up and run round to the foot of the bed*)

Sally Why, it's our stockings and they are packed full!

Molly They must have fallen on the floor.

Sally (*drying her tears*) And we thought Father Christmas had forgotten us! Weren't we silly?





THE THIRD SNIPPET

Characters:

"Red" Wilton, a cow-hand
Carson, the Sheriff
The Sheriff's Men



Scene: A shack near a ranch-house in Arizona

("Red" Wilton is sitting on a box by a rough wooden table. He is cleaning a revolver. The sound of horses' hooves is heard. Wilton looks up, tense and alert. He places the revolver in his holster and stands, facing the door. The sound of horses stops. There is a knock at the door)

Wilton Who is it?

Carson (*outside*) Sheriff Carson. Open the door, Wilton.

Wilton It's not locked.

(The door opens. The Sheriff enters, followed by several men)

Wilton State your business, Sheriff.

Carson Our business, Wilton? Our business is the Law. I reckon you heard of all this mysterious cattle-rustlin' that's been goin' on around here?

Wilton Yeah! I heard some talk of it.

Carson Well, it ain't mysterious no more. We know the identity of the thief.

Wilton Well, that's mighty clever of you, Sheriff!

Carson That's enough! Wilton, you're under arrest!

(Wilton suddenly whips out two guns)

Wilton Under arrest, am I? Well—come and get me!

8. MORE MOVEMENT GAMES

We are lions prowling along the grass. Suddenly we see an antelope. We crouch and spring!

We are elephants moving slowly along. Let us use one arm to represent the movement of the elephant's trunk.

We are people who have tasted drugged wine. As we walk along we begin to feel drowsier and drowsier. We sink slowly to the floor. We fall into a deep sleep.

We are travelling through a jungle of thick undergrowth. We use knives and hatchets to slash our way through.

We are sheltering from a storm in an old, ruined house when, suddenly, the floor above us partially collapses on our heads! We have to lift it slightly to get free. Press upwards with the palms of the hands. Lift! Feel the weight of the heavy timbers.



9. ANOTHER STORY TO MIME

Here is another story for you to mime. It is called :



THE EXPLORERS

Once upon a time there was a band of explorers pushing their way through the long jungle grass. Their leader had gone on ahead by himself. With great difficulty he pushed his way through the long, thick grass until he came out into a clearing. He saw the trees, the creepers and

the vines, but what he did *not* see was a band of savages hidden in the surrounding undergrowth. There they lay, carefully hidden, watching—watching this strange white man who had invaded their territory.

At a signal from their chief, they drew their bows and shot a shower of arrows at the white man. One found its mark, and the explorer fell to the ground, wounded in the shoulder.

The savages crept cautiously—*very* cautiously—nearer and nearer to their helpless victim and were almost upon him when the other explorers burst out from the undergrowth. They at once saw what had happened. They fired their rifles at the savages—some standing, some dropping on one knee, some lying

prone on the ground—whilst two of them ran to help their wounded comrade. The savages fled in confusion. Some were killed. Others were wounded and lay rolling on the ground. Gently and tenderly, the explorers carried their wounded leader back through the jungle to their camp.



Let us choose who are to play:

The leader of the explorers

The chief of the savages

The explorers (including two who run
to help their leader)

The savages

Now we must decide which part of our acting-space shall be the explorers' camp, which shall be the clearing, and where the savages lie in wait.

10. THREE MORE "SNIPPETS"

THE FIRST SNIPPET

Characters:

The King
The Queen
Courtiers
1st Fairy
2nd Fairy
3rd Fairy
A Witch

Scene: - A Room in the Palace

(Near the centre of the stage is a cot in which lies the sleeping baby Princess. The King and Queen are looking at the baby. The Courtiers stand round)

King *(to the Courtiers)* This is a very happy occasion for us—the christening of our baby Princess!

Courtiers *(bowing)* Yes, Your Majesty!

King I have invited the Fairies to bestow their gifts upon the Princess. Are they here?

Queen Yes, here they come now.

(Enter three Fairies)

King Welcome! Thrice welcome, Fairies!

Fairies (*curtseying*) Your Majesty!

(*The 1st Fairy goes up to the cot*)

1st Fairy Princess fair, my gift to thee is—beauty!

(*She waves her wand and retires. The 2nd Fairy goes to the cot*)

2nd Fairy Princess fair, my gift to thee is—wisdom!

(*She waves her wand and retires. The 3rd Fairy goes to the cot*)

3rd Fairy Princess fair, my gift to thee is—health!

(*She waves her wand and retires*)

King Thank you, good Fairies. And now . . .

(*Enter the Witch*)

Witch Why was I not invited to the christening?

Queen Who are you?

Witch I am a fairy just as much as *they* are (*pointing to the three fairies*) and *I* shall bestow my gift upon the Princess too!

(*She moves up to the cot*)

King Stop her! She's a witch!

(*The Courtiers move forward*)

Witch Stand back! (*They stop*) My gift to the Princess is this! On the day she becomes seventeen, she shall lose her beauty, her wisdom and her health, and she shall become—a beggar-maid!

THE SECOND SNIPPET

Characters:

John - ~~fast~~ quick

Harold *breathless*.

Daphne - *calm*.

Sheila - *breathless*.

A Ticket Collector *slow*.

Scene: Outside a railway station

(A ticket collector stands at the barrier. John and Daphne are obviously waiting for someone. John paces up and down impatiently, and keeps glancing at his wrist-watch)

Daphne Oh, John, for goodness' sake stop fidgeting!

John That's all very well. *(He points to his watch)* Look at the time!

Daphne Well, your dashing about won't make them come any more quickly!

John The train's due to leave in exactly one minute and if we miss it . . .

(Sheila runs on, breathlessly)

Sheila Sorry I'm late!

John So there you are! Where's Harold?

Sheila He's coming!

(A guard's whistle sounds)

John (*very agitated*) Oh, heavens! That's the train! Where is the boy?

Daphne (*calling*) Harold! Come on! We shall miss the train!

Sheila Have you got the tickets?

John Yes, of course I've got them! Where is that silly ass?

Daphne Here he is!

(Enter Harold—also breathless)

John Come on, slow-coach—I think we've missed the train!

Harold Sorry! I couldn't get here any sooner!

(They dash up to the barrier)

Ticket Collector 'Ere, 'ere! Steady on! One at a time! What's all the hurry about?

John Sorry, but we've got to catch the one thirty-three to Whipton.

Ticket Collector The one thirty-three to Whipton?

John Yes, yes! Hurry up, please, and let us through!

Ticket Collector No hurry, young man! The one thirty-three's running twenty-five minutes late!



THE THIRD SNIPPET

Characters:

shouts	George	} shouts. Country Folk
shouts.	Ebenezer	
	Sarah	
	Prudence	
	A Pedlar	
	The Beadle	

Scene: A Village Green. A long time ago

(George and Ebenezer are talking together. Ebenezer is deaf)

Ebenezer *(cupping his hand behind his ear)* What's that you say, George?

George I said I heard as how Farmer Bodkin's pig were in a bad way.

(Enter Sarah and Prudence)

Sarah Good day, George! Good day, Ebenezer!

Ebenezer What's that you say?

Sarah I said "Good day!" Deary me, Ebenezer, when Farmer Bodkin hired you—well, for him it must have been a sad day!

Ebenezer Ay, I know! George was just telling me.

Prudence Telling you what?

Ebenezer As Farmer Bodkin's pig were in a bad way!

Sarah Oh, deary me! Deary me!

(Enter the Pedlar)

Pedlar Come, buy! Come, buy! Good day, my friends!
Allow me to show you my wares. Here I have a cure for baldness, and here a cure for the croup.

< **Prudence** (*looking at Ebenezer*) Have you a cure for deafness?

< **Sarah** Or one for stupidity?

Pedlar Ah, no! But I have pretty ribbons for your hair and brooches for your gown.

(Enter the Beadle)

Beadle (*crossly*) Now, then, you varmint! Be off with you! We don't want idle fellows like you in our village. If you're not gone in five minutes, I'll have you in the stocks—see if I don't!

Pedlar With pleasure, Mr. Beadle! But, before I go, could I interest you in this marvellous draught?

(He holds up a bottle)

Beadle What is it?

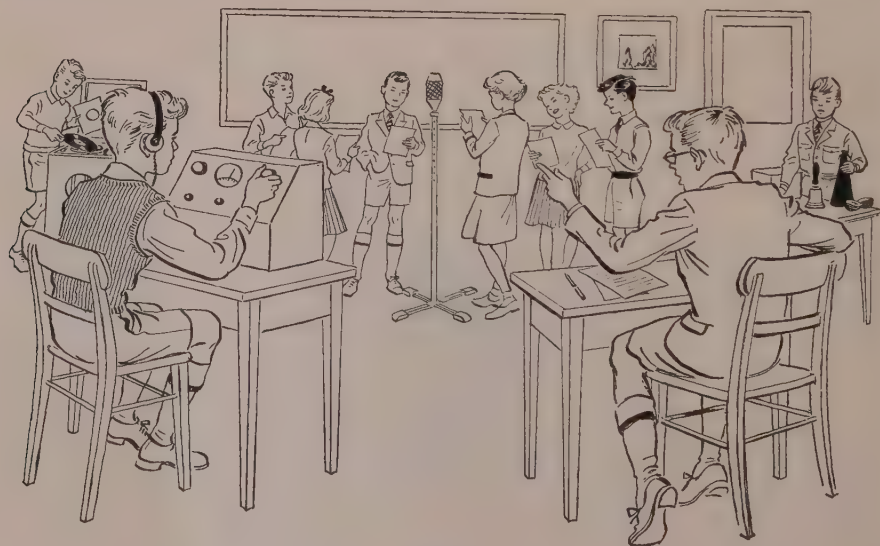
Pedlar A cure for bad temper, sir!

Beadle Oh-h-h-h-h-h-h!!!



11. A RADIO PLAY

Let us now imagine we are in a broadcasting studio and we are putting a play "on the air". We might have one of the school jumping-stands for a microphone and the players stand in a half-circle round it. Facing them is the Producer, sitting at a desk, twiddling knobs and pressing buttons as he adjusts the tone and volume and lets the actors know when to begin. As the players are only being heard and not seen, they may read their lines from their books. There is no need for them to learn the parts off by heart, but, of course, they must rehearse the play several times until the Producer is satisfied that they sound like the characters they are supposed to be, that they are speaking clearly, but easily and without strain, and that they are going at the right speed at the right time.



WANG
A Play for Radio

Characters:



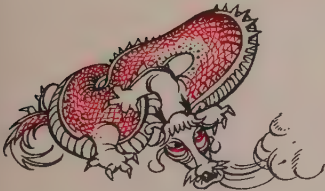
Chang
his father



Wang
a little Chinese boy



Soong
his mother



1st Dragon



The Emperor of China



2nd Dragon



An Old Man



The Narrator

We shall also need an Announcer and an Effects Man. Others who have nothing to do can be Engineers, looking after the transmitting apparatus.

Announcer We now present "Wang", a play for radio, based on an old Chinese story.

(Fade in Chinese music. Fade out)

Narrator Allow me to introduce to you—Wang, a little Chinese boy.

Wang I am Wang. I work in my father's paddy-fields. I weed the rice-plants and scare the birds away from the grain when it is ripe.

Narrator And here is Chang, the father of Wang.

Chang I am Chang. I am a farmer and I grow rice. When the rains have come and the plants are growing, it is pleasant in my fields. We see the great crane standing on one leg or perhaps a flight of wild geese against the blue sky. We hear the voices of my workers as they call to each other, but the sweetest sound of all is that of the temple bells ringing at sunset to tell us our toil is over for the day.

Wang Then we go home to supper, which Soong, my mother, has prepared for us. I am always sleepy after a long day in the sun. I love the sun, but too much of it is not good for my father's crops!

Chang No, indeed! It dries them up and, in time, if the drought is long, they die!

Narrator In the year before our story took place, there was no rain at all! The plants turned yellow, then withered up and died. There was hardly any water in the rivers, just a few muddy pools. And next year it was the same. Chang sighed and Soong wept, and often there was so little food that Wang felt very hungry.

Wang I didn't mind the hunger so much as the sadness in my father's eyes as he gazed at his ruined crops.

Narrator But Wang was not the kind of boy to mope and do nothing! He thought to himself . . .

Wang I am a strong boy! I must do something to help my father! I will go to the city and see if anyone will employ me as an errand boy. Then I will send the money I earn to my mother to buy food.

Narrator And so Wang went to his father.

Wang Honoured Father, please give me leave to walk to the city.

Chang Why do you wish to walk to the city, my son?

Wang So that I can get work and send money to Mother to buy food.

Chang My poor child, the city is more than fifty miles away! And when you get there, who will hire a simple country boy who does not know his way about?

Wang Please let me try, Father. I am sure that I can look after myself, and, if I leave home, at least there will be one less mouth to feed!

Chang Well, my son—if you think it will do any good . . .

Wang I am sure of it, Father! Please let me go!

Chang Very well, my boy. Our hearts will be heavy at parting from you and we shall be anxious until we see you again, but you shall do as you wish! (*He calls*) Soong!

Soong I am here, husband!

Chang Wang, our son, has sought my permission to go to the city to see if he can get work. I have consented.

Soong My boy, *must* you go?

Wang Yes, Mother. I am young and strong and I must try to help.

Soong Are you sure you will be safe?

Wang Do not grieve, Mother. I shall earn money for you to buy food. Then, when better times return, you will see me again!

Soong I will pack your clean shirt and a little rice in a bundle. The food should last you three days. Be sure to take your big hat of straw to protect you from the hot sun. How shall I know you are well? I shall worry and worry until I see you again!

Wang Be of good cheer, Mother. All will be well!

(Fade in music. Fade out)

Narrator And so Wang set out for the city. Carrying his bundle over his shoulder on a stick, and his wooden shoes in the other hand, he trudged along in the thick, white dust of the high road. And, as he went, he sang a little song his mother had taught him . . .

Wang *(singing)*

“She lives all alone, does the little Chinese lady,
In the house by the dark, cold water.”

(As Wang sings, we hear his footsteps as he trudges along the road. As the song ends, we hear the slower footsteps of the Old Man)

Old Man Oh, dear, oh, deary me, what a long road! What a heavy bundle for a poor old man to carry!

(The footsteps cease)

Wang Can I help you, old man?

Old Man That is very kind of you, my boy, but you’ve got a bundle of your own to carry!

Wang Yes, but it’s only a little one. I can tie my shoes to the stick and have a free arm for your bundle.

Old Man Well, thank you very much. That will be a great help to me. Here you are.

Wang There! You see? I can manage both bundles quite easily.

Old Man Now let us go along together, but don't go too fast, my boy—my legs are not so young as they used to be!

(The sound of footsteps recommences. Fade out)

Narrator A little later . . .

(Fade in the sound of footsteps, going rather more slowly now and the sound of Wang breathing heavily with his exertions)

Wang Oh, dear! How hot it is!

Old Man Yes, indeed!

Wang And how dark it is growing! The blue sky has gone. It is now black and heavy!

Old Man Would you like to rest?

Wang No, no! I can manage!

(Suddenly there is a tremendous crash of thunder)

Wang *(fearfully)* Oh-h-h-h-h-h!!!

Old Man Good gracious! The poor boy has dropped his bundles and fallen flat on his face! What is the matter?

Wang Oh, I'm so frightened! I'm afraid of the demons in the sky!

Old Man The demons in the sky? Well, I never! *(He laughs)*
It's only my dragons having a bit of a fight up there!

Wang Your dragons? Then, who are you?

Old Man Get up, my boy, and I will tell you.

(We hear Wang scramble to his feet)

Old Man That's better! I'm a magic man!

Wang A magic man?

Old Man I come down from the sky sometimes to have a bit of fun and to find out things, you know!

Wang What kind of things?

Old Man Well, for instance, things like your having a kind heart and carrying an old man's bundle as well as your own! I'm very pleased with you, Wang, and I'm going to show you some wonderful things—how I make thunder and how the rain comes.

Wang Rain? Can you make it rain?

Old Man Of course I can! Let me show you! Now stand quite still. I'm going to take you high up into the sky!

(There is the sound of a gong, followed by little tinkling notes going up and up the scales)

Wang Oh! Oh! Oh! I'm rising from the ground!

Old Man Don't be alarmed! I'm with you!

(There is another crash of thunder)

Wang Oh, dear! We're making straight for that black cloud where the dreadful noise is coming from!

Old Man Don't be afraid! That's where my dragons are. They're nice, friendly dragons really, but they *will* fight!

Wang We're going faster and faster!

Old Man Yes, we're nearly there. Look up!

Wang Why, I can see two monster tubs!

Old Man Now we're high enough. *(The tinkling notes cease)*
Look inside them.

Wang There's a green dragon in each tub—and the tubs are bumping into each other like fury!

(There is another tremendous crash of thunder)

Old Man *(laughing)* Oh, you naughty old things!

(The thunder ceases)

1st Dragon Be quiet! It's the Master!

2nd Dragon So it is!

Old Man *(good-naturedly)* What's all the row about?

1st Dragon Oh, *he* wants to make it rain in one place, and *I* want to make it rain in another.

2nd Dragon Yes, *I* want it to rain on the Emperor's garden. *He* wants it to rain on the Prime Minister's orchard.

Old Man And where do *you* want it to rain, Wang?

Wang *(quickly)* Oh, on my father's paddy-fields, please!

Old Man Well then, jump in! Jump into one of the tubs!

Wang Which one?

Old Man It doesn't matter—the nearer one will do. The dragon won't hurt you. In you go!

(There is the sound of a splash)

Wang Why, the tubs are full of water! I was so interested in the dragons I hadn't noticed!

Old Man Of course they're full of water! That's how we make the rain—by splashing it over the side.

Wang Really? Let me try.

(We hear the splash, splash, splash, as Wang scoops the water over the side)

Wang Oh, this is fun!

Old Man That will make the paddy grow!

(Splash, splash, splash!)

Old Man Look down, Wang!

(The splashing stops)

Wang Why, the ground looks like a lot of little brown pocket-handkerchiefs!

Old Man Those are the brown, withered fields. And see—there are your father's paddy-fields, directly below us!

Wang Yes, yes! I see them!

Old Man Well, splash away, my boy—as much as you like!

Wang I will! I will!

(Splash, splash, splash!)

Old Man Look out! There's going to be a smash in a minute!

Wang *(enjoying every minute of it)* Never mind!

(There is another tremendous crash of thunder)

Wang Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! This is grand!

(Splash, splash, splash!)

Wang Look, I've almost emptied the tub!

Old Man So you have, my boy! Look down again!

(The splashing stops)

Wang *(wonderingly)* Why, the little brown pocket-handkerchiefs are turning green!

Old Man So they are! Why not take a rest?

Wang I think I will . . . Oh, look, the dragon in my tub has gone to sleep!

Old Man Yes, and the other dragon looks very sulky, doesn't he?

Wang I hope I haven't spoiled their fun.

Old Man Not at all! Don't you worry about that! See—the dark clouds have gone. The sky is clear again.

Wang How beautiful and still it is! Why, the stars are coming out . . . don't they seem close?

Old Man They *are* close! As we drift by, you can put out your hand and take one.

Wang Can I? How wonderful! . . . Oh, here's one now! Can I reach it? (*He grunts a little as he strains outwards*) There! Got it! Isn't it a beauty? It's like a diamond and as big as an egg!

Old Man Hide it in your coat, Wang, and hold it tight—we are falling. Hold it tight—we are falling.

(The Old Man's voice begins to fade and the little tinkling notes begin again, but, this time, descending)

Old Man Hold it tight—we are falling . . . falling . . . falling . . .

(The tinkling notes reach the bottom of the scale and there is again the sound of the gong. After a short pause—)

Wang Where am I? Dear me, I'm back on the dusty road! But no—it's not dusty any more! It's washed beautifully clean and little rivulets are running at each side! And the fields! The fields are green again! The rice plants are fine and healthy! Old man! Old man! . . . Why, he's gone! And where are the tubs and the dragons? . . . Gone! And my star! Has that gone too? Ah, no! here it is, safe and sound! I must take it home and show it to my father! I wonder what he'll say!

(We hear Wang's footsteps as he runs off. They fade away into the distance)

Narrator And back at the farm Chang and Soong were watching for their son . . .

Chang If only Wang would return, everything would be perfect!

Soong Wait, my husband, do you hear anything?

(We hear the faint footsteps of Wang approaching. They get louder)

Chang Footsteps! Is it Wang? Yes—yes, it is! Here he comes, safe and sound! Welcome home, Wang! Welcome home!

Soong My boy!

Wang Mother! Father!

Chang We've had such rain! We feared you'd be washed away!

Soong And the paddy-fields are green again. The water came down as if someone was splashing in a great tub!

Wang *(quietly)* I was splashing!

Chang } *(together)* Ho! ho! ho! Do you hear that, Mother?

Soong } Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Wang You may laugh—but wait until you see what I have here—look!

Soong How beautiful! What is it, Wang? What is it?

Wang It's a star!

Chang A what?

Wang A star!

Chang Let me feel your forehead, son! The sun has touched you! You have a fever!

Wang No, Father, I'm well enough. And I'm going to carry my star to the Emperor, for an Emperor should know what a star is worth!

Narrator So Wang took his treasure to the Emperor . . .

(Fade in music. Fade out)

Emperor You say, Wang, you have brought me a wonderful present?

Wang I have indeed, Sir!

Emperor And what is this wonderful present?

Wang It is a real star from the night sky!

Emperor *(wonderingly)* A star from the sky? It is not possible! Let me see this star!

Wang Here it is, Sir. Please accept it from your humblest and most unworthy subject.

Emperor A star! A real star from the night sky! It is most beautiful!

Wang I am glad you are pleased, Sir.

Emperor Pleased? I am delighted! Lord Chancellor, give to my good friend, Wang, great bags of silver and gold. Never before have I received so wonderful a gift!

Wang Oh, Sir, you are too kind!

Emperor No, Wang—for, although I am the Emperor of all China, I have never yet seen a star except above me in the sky, and now, thanks to you, I possess one of my very own!

(Fade in music. Fade out)

Narrator This brings us to the end of our play. We hope it has given you pleasure. Thank you for your very kind attention.

(Fade in music. Play to end)

Announcer You have been listening to “Wang”, a play based on an old Chinese legend.

Those taking part were . . . , and the play was produced by . . .

12. MAKING OUR OWN PLAY

—FROM A LOCATION

Earlier, you will remember, we made and acted our own plays from the given name of an object.

Let us now divide again into four groups. Each group will be given, this time, not an object, but a particular place. They will then retire, as before, think about the place and the kind of thing which might happen there. From this they will make up a story and then act it.

If, for example, a group were given :

“ A CELLAR ”

they might possibly think about it on the following lines :

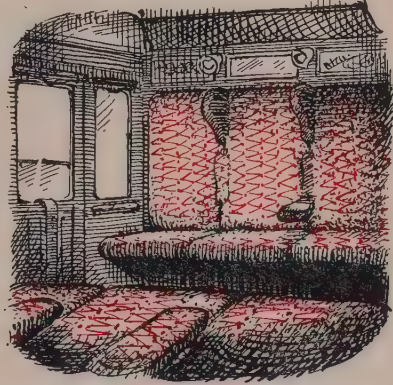
A cellar . . . beneath an old house in a city. In it is hiding a man who has been attempting to lead a revolution. The revolution has failed and the soldiers of the Government are searching for him. A friend, who comes each day to bring him food, has just arrived. They talk for a few minutes. Then they hear the outer door at the top of the cellar steps being forced open. It is the soldiers! They have been betrayed! Are they caught like rats in a trap? No! Low down on one wall they have noticed a grating covering the entrance to an old drain which leads down to the river. It is their only chance to escape! They tug and strain at the rusty iron grating. Will they be in time? Just as they hear the outer door burst open, the grating comes loose! Quickly, they scramble through the narrow opening! There are footsteps on the stairs. The soldiers rush into the room, but they are too late—the birds have flown!

The group would then choose the cast, rehearse and then act the story before the rest of the class who would be the audience.

Here are the “places”:



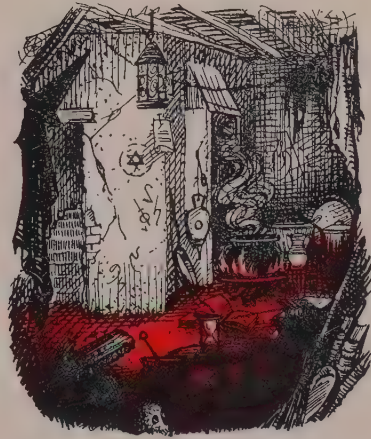
A PRISON CELL



A COMPARTMENT IN
A RAILWAY TRAIN



A CHINA AND GLASS-
WARE SHOP



A WITCH'S
KITCHEN

13. A PLAY TO PRODUCE

The play which follows teaches a lesson, and so it may be called a serious play. At the same time, it has its lighter moments, as, for instance, when the Grand Vizier and the Chancellor are making themselves look very foolish by pretending to see the tree that is not there, thereby following their usual custom of appearing to agree with everything the Caliph says. The play offers great opportunities to the scenic artists and costume designers who can really "let themselves go" and create a magnificent, glittering spectacle!



THE CHERRY-TREE

A Comedy in One Act with Prologue

Characters:



The Calipha



Abdul
the Caliph's personal slave



A Beggar



The Chancellor



The Caliph of Bagdad



The Grand Vizier



Two men Slaves



The Calipha's Slave-girls

THE PROLOGUE

Scene: The Caliph's Palace in Bagdad

(The scene, as the curtain rises, reminds us of the Tales of the Arabian Nights. It is rich and ornate. Through arches we see an expanse of blue sky and the sunlit domes and minarets of Bagdad. There are rich draperies hung here and there, and on a couch, placed on a raised dais, reclines the Caliph. At his feet sits Abdul, his personal slave. Abdul is plucking the strings of a musical instrument and singing to his Master a slow, sad air)

Abdul (*singing*) The glowing sun now sinks from sight
And gilds the minaret with light.
Soon night's enfolding, silken pall
Upon the waiting earth will fall;
And as its darkness fills the air,
So fills my heavy heart with care.

Caliph (*wearily*) Enough, Abdul! I am weary and depressed,
and your mournful music does nothing to raise my spirits.

Abdul A thousand pardons, Master! Shall I sing something
light and gay?

Caliph No, no! I am not in the mood for music.

Abdul Tell me, Master, how I can help you.

Caliph I wish I knew, Abdul. I wish I knew how anyone could
help me.

Abdul What troubles you, Master?

*(The Caliph rises, walks over to the arches, and gazes out
over the city)*

Caliph I am lonely, Abdul.

Abdul Lonely, Master?

Caliph That, no doubt, seems strange to you, does it not? That the rich, powerful Caliph of Bagdad should be lonely is unbelievable!

(Abdul remains silent)

Caliph Yet, it is true. I have no friends—no real friends.

Abdul There is the Grand Vizier . . . and the Chancellor.

Caliph The Grand Vizier and the Chancellor?

Abdul They always agree with you, my lord, and they speak very pleasantly.

Caliph They do, Abdul—and that is just the trouble! They always agree with me! They speak pleasantly to me! They praise, they flatter, they bow, they scrape, but *(feelingly)* never for one single moment are they sincere!

Abdul No, Master?

Caliph That is not friendship, Abdul. They have no genuine affection for me. All that concerns them is their own selfish interests. Sometimes they sadden me. At other times I am so angry I feel they ought to be taught a lesson.

Abdul A lesson, Master?

Caliph Yes, but how? *(Pacing up and down)* How could I show them up for the insincere flatterers they really are?

Abdul Let me think . . . Yes . . . yes, I think I know how it could be done!

Caliph You do, Abdul? Then tell me quickly!

(The two come close together)

Abdul If, my lord, you would consent to carry out this little plot, I think we could . . .

(The scene fades out)

Curtain



THE PLAY

(The scene is the same. Sitting on the couch is the Calipha, attended by her slave-girls)

Calipha *(clapping her hands)* Attend me, slaves!

(The slaves run forward and sink to their knees before the Calipha)

Calipha Today is an important occasion. I must be attired in my richest robes to receive our eminent visitor.

1st Slave Who is the eminent visitor, my lady?

Calipha An Emissary from the Emperor of Japan comes to greet the Caliph.

2nd Slave Then this is indeed an important day. I will bring your ceremonial coat, my lady.

(She goes out)

3rd Slave And I your jewelled head-dress, my lady.

(She goes out)

4th Slave And I will bring the rarest perfumes, my lady.

(She goes out)

1st Slave And I your jewels and ornaments, my lady.

(She goes out. The 2nd Slave returns)

2nd Slave Here, my lady, is the ceremonial coat, richly embroidered with silks and jewels.

(She helps the Calipha to put on the coat. The 3rd Slave returns)

3rd Slave Here, my lady, is your head-dress, ornamented with rubies from the mines and pearls from the ocean.

(She helps the Calipha to put it on. The 4th Slave returns carrying a tray on which are various bottles and jars)

4th Slave Here, my lady, are the rarest perfumes and spices.

(She applies a little perfume to the Calipha's hair and to her finger-tips. The first Slave returns, bearing a casket)

1st Slave Here, my lady, are jewels rich and rare. Pearls for your throat. *(She puts them on the Calipha)* Rings for your fingers. *(She places them on the Calipha's fingers)* And sapphires for your ears. *(She fixes them on)*

2nd Slave Here come the Grand Vizier and the Chancellor.

(Enter the Grand Vizier and the Chancellor. They approach the Calipha and bow)

Grand Vizier My lady, you are as fair as the full moon!

Chancellor And as beautiful as the lotus flower.

(Enter two slaves who stand one on either side of the entrance)

1st Slave (Guard) My lords and ladies, the Caliph!

(The Caliph enters. All except the Calipha prostrate themselves. He takes his seat on the couch by the Calipha)

Caliph Arise!

(They rise)

Caliph Grand Vizier!

Grand Vizier (*bowing low*) My lord!

Caliph Chancellor!

Chancellor (*bowing low*) My lord!

Caliph Ladies! Today we receive a distinguished and eminent guest—the Emissary from the Court of the Emperor of Japan.

Grand Vizier How wise and how right is the Caliph to receive this visitor!

Chancellor The visit will undoubtedly cement the bonds of friendship between the Emperor and the mighty Caliph!

Caliph Has our visitor arrived?

2nd Slave (Guard) He waits in the ante-room, my lord!

Caliph Then conduct him at once to our presence.

(The two guards go out)

Caliph Our Court is highly honoured by this important visit, my lord.

Chancellor May I dare to suggest that it is the Court of Japan that is highly honoured, my lady, by being allowed to send its servant to the Court of the excellent and most gracious Caliph!

(The two guards return)

1st Guard The Emissary of the Emperor of Japan!

(Enter Abdul, disguised as a Japanese lord. There is nothing in his arms but he pretends to be carrying a large, heavy box. He pretends to place it on the floor before the Caliph. He bows low)

Abdul My lord!

Caliph Welcome, my friend! Welcome to our Court.

Abdul I thank you, my lord.

Caliph What tidings do you bring of our brother the Emperor?

Abdul He is well, my lord, and, as a token of his love and esteem, has sent you this present.

(He indicates the imaginary box. The others stare in a perplexed manner)

Caliph What is the present?

Abdul A cherry-tree, my lord. A most marvellous cherry-tree! It blooms continuously. As one blossom falls, another takes its place!

Caliph Truly, we must see this wonderful tree! Grand Vizier, open the box!

Grand Vizier I, my lord?

Caliph Yes, yes! Why do you hesitate? Do you expect our guest to open the box himself?

Grand Vizier Oh, no, no, no, my lord!

(He pretends to lift back the lid of the box)

Caliph And now, Chancellor, be good enough to lift the tree from the box.

Chancellor L-lift the tree from the box, my lord?

Caliph Certainly!

Chancellor V-very well, my lord!

(He pretends to lift the heavy potted tree from the box)

Chancellor Where shall I put it, my lord?

Caliph Why, in the centre of the floor where all may see it!

(He pretends to place the tree on the floor)

Caliph And now, Grand Vizier, remove the box!

Grand Vizier Certainly, my lord, certainly! I will place it over here, in the corner, out of the way.

(He pretends to do so. The Caliph rises. He walks round the imaginary tree, inspecting it closely.)

Caliph Tell me, Grand Vizier, what do you think of my wonderful present?

Grand Vizier It is the most beautiful tree in the world, my lord! Don't you agree, Chancellor?

Chancellor What? Oh—oh, yes! Certainly! Look at the delicate shade of the pink blossom!

Grand Vizier And the rich green of the leaves!

Chancellor And the sturdy trunk!

Grand Vizier And the slender branches! *(To Abdul)* It is, I must admit, quite a fitting present for the Caliph.

Abdul Thank you, sir! I'm glad it pleases you.

Chancellor Grand Vizier, we must order the gardeners to plant it outside the Caliph's window.

Grand Vizier Yes, yes! Then he will see the beautiful blossoms when he wakes and enjoy their sweet fragrance!

(He pretends to sniff at the blossoms. The voice of the beggar is heard outside)

Beggar Baksheesh! Baksheesh!

Grand Vizier Who is that?

Chancellor Oh, just a beggar outside the window.

Grand Vizier How dare he approach so close to the Caliph? Guard, send him away!

Caliph No, Guard! Bring him here!

(The Caliph resumes his seat as the 1st Guard goes out)

Grand Vizier But, of course, my lord—you are quite right!

Chancellor Certainly my lord is right. He is always sympathetic—even to the lowest of his subjects!

(The 1st Guard returns, ushering in the beggar, who looks scared in these unfamiliar surroundings)

Caliph You are the beggar who called just now beneath our window?

Beggar I am, my lord, but I beg you to forgive me! If I annoyed you with my noisy din . . .

Caliph Fear not, my friend! No harm shall befall you!

Beggar The Caliph is most kind!

Caliph Tell me, beggar, what do you think of my cherry-tree?

Beggar *(looking around him)* Cherry-tree, my lord?

Grand Vizier Answer the Caliph, miserable fool!

Beggar Which cherry-tree, my lord?

Grand Vizier *(pointing to the centre of the floor)* Why, this one, of course!

Chancellor *(also pointing)* Don't you see its tender pink blossom?

Grand Vizier And its beautiful green leaves?

Beggar I see nothing!

Chancellor } *(together)* What?
Grand Vizier }

Caliph Do you not see the tree, then?

Beggar Believe me, my lord, there is nothing there at all! These gentlemen *(indicating the Grand Vizier and the Chancellor)* are pointing to an empty space!

Caliph Allah be praised for an honest man!

Chancellor }
Grand Vizier } (*together*) What?

Caliph Here at last I find a sincere friend who tells me the truth!

Grand Vizier But, my lord . . .

Caliph Enough, Grand Vizier! Say no more! I search for a truthful man and find him amongst the lowest of my subjects!

Chancellor Of course, my lord, we really knew all the time . . .

Caliph But neither of you cared to tell me the truth!

(The Chancellor and Grand Vizier are silent)

Caliph And now, having received your lesson, allow me to reveal to you your teacher!

(He makes a sign to Abdul, who removes his head-dress, wig and false moustache)

All Abdul, the slave!

Caliph Abdul—my faithful friend, and the one whose clever brain thought out this little deception to teach you a lesson! And now, heed my commands! Abdul shall be raised to the Office of Grand Vizier!

Abdul Oh, my lord!

Grand Vizier My lord!

Caliph And my truthful friend (*indicating the beggar*) henceforth becomes my Chancellor!

Beggar My lord is too kind!

Chancellor My lord, my lord! What is to become of us?

Caliph You two selfish flatterers shall be given some work to do! You will become gardeners in the Palace gardens!

Grand Vizier }
Chancellor } *(together)*. Gardeners, my lord?

Caliph Yes, gardeners! Your particular work will be to grow cherry-trees, and you will not be restored to favour until you have produced a cherry-tree as beautiful and as wonderful as the one you so recently admired! It will serve as a constant reminder to you that truth and sincerity are valued far above toadying and flattery! *(To the Guards)* Take them away!

(The Guards escort the crestfallen pair from the room)

All Long live the Caliph!

Caliph And long live all my true friends!

CURTAIN





LONGMANS



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